Exploration of mineral sand of Chavara in Kerala

408. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the latest position of the joint venture proposal in the public sector for the explorations of mineral sand of Chavara in Kerala in participations with NMDC, IRE and KSIDC;

(b) whether there is any proposal to disinvest the shares of NMDC and IRE; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and its impact on the proposed new joint venture public sector project of synthetic rutile plant in Chavara?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL), National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) and Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for exploring the possibility of initially setting up a value addition plant near Chavara in Kerala for production of synthetic rutile based on ilmenite produced by Chavara unit of IREL and subsequently an integrated mining, mineral separation and value addition plant. The work pertaining to market survey has been awarded.

(b) No, Sir. At present, there is no proposal under consideration to disinvest the shares in NMDC and IREL.

(c) Does not arise.

Approval for mining mineral sand

409. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Kerala has recommended any application of Kerala Rare Earths Minerals Ltd. seeking approval for mining mineral sand in the coastal area of Alappuzha district in Kerala to the Central Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;

(c) whether any authentic study has been conducted on the environmental impact of mining of beach sand minerals in the coastal area of Alappuzha; and

(d) if so, the details of the study report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Government of Kerala has submitted 3 proposals seeking clearance of the Government of India for grant of mining lease in favour of M/s. Kerala Rare Earths and Minerals Ltd., Alwaye for 20 years for a total area of 13.6500 hectares of land located in Purakkad village of Ambalapuzha Taluk and Thrikkunnapuzha village of Karthikapalli Taluk both of Alappuzha District of Kerala. The applications are presently being processed in consultation with various agencies concerned.

(c) Government of India has not conducted any environmental study in the coastal area of Alappuzha.

(d) Does not arise.

Irradiation technique for food processing

410. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether irradiation technique is useful and cheap for food processing;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to set up irradiation facilities in Southern States particularly in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The radiation processing technology for food preservation is very effective, useful and economically viable. Considering the advantages it offers, over the conventional means, say fumigation, it turns out to be a cost-effective method for processing of food